DEVIL'S REIGN #1/2 • SILVER SURFER & WITCHBLADE

WIZARD 1/2

MARVEL COMICS

TOP COW PRODUCTIONS, INC.

Devil's REIGN

SILVER SURFER

WITCHBLADE

DEVIL'S REIGN 1/2: SILVER SURFER® / WITCHBLADE™ Vol. 1, #1/2, MARCH 1997. FIRST PRINTING. WITCHBLADE, its logo AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS are ™ & © 1997 TOP COW Productions Inc. SILVER SURFER, its logo, MEPHISTO AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS are ®, ™ & © 1997 Marvel Characters Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. The entire contents of this book are ™ & © 1997 TOP COW Productions Inc., MARVEL CHARACTERS Inc. and WIZARD PRESS. Any similarities to persons, living or dead is purely coincidental. Wizard and the Wizard logotype are registered trademarks of Wizard Press.
Printed in Canada

THE PLACE: MEPHISTO'S COURT.
THE TIME: NOW.
SKRATCH, ATTEND ME. YOUR MASTER HAS THE MOST GLORIOUS NEWS TO AMAZE YOU WITH.
I'VE FOUND A NEW CANVAS, UPON WHICH I SHALL PAINT MY MASTER-PIECE.
CANVAS, SIRE? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU ENJOYED PAINTING. Y'KNOW, I'VE HEARD THAT PEOPLE YOUR AGE HAVE TROUBLE ADJUSTING TO RETIREMENT.
RETIRED? WHY, I'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN! NOW, FOLLOW ME TO THE SPHERE OF WORLDS. I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.
I'VE DISCOVERED A NEW DIMENSION, PRISTINE AND VIRGINAL. AND IN IT, THERE IS NO DEVIL. IN FACT, THEY HAVE NO GODS OF DEATH AT ALL!
IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES. I WILL HAVE NO COMPETITION. CONQUERING THIS DIMENSION WILL BE EASIER THAN SELLING COSMETICS TO TAMMY FAYE BAKER.

JUST LOOK AT THEIR PATHETIC EXCUSES FOR HEROES. WHY, EVEN THEIR NAMES ARE RIDICULOUS. CAN YOU IMAGINE BEING CALLED FIST?
THEIR NOBILITY AND HEROICS MAKE THE BILE IN MY THROAT RISE, RAKING THEIR SOULS OVER THE COALS OF HELL, AH...THAT WILL BE A PLEASURE.
WITCHBLADE
OH MASTER, YOU ARE SO FULL OF EVIL THAT MY SCALES THROB.
HEATWAVE
ORDNANCE
IMPACT
STRYKER
FIST
MEPHISTO'S SPHERE BEGINS TO FLICKER. SLOWLY, A NEW IMAGE FILLS IT.

MEPHISTO'S LECHEROUS EYES SETTLE ON THE NEW VISAGE. A SMILE THAT WOULD TERRIFY THE POPE SNAKES ACROSS HIS FACE.
YESSS, THIS ONE IS MOST INTRIGUING. THIS SARA PEZZINI, HER BEAUTY AND POWER ARE STAGGERING, YET SHE IS SO NAIVE. SO RARELY DO I FIND ONE OF SUCH PURITY.
DEFILING HER SOUL AND ANOINTING HER MY QUEEN WILL GIVE ME A LIFETIME OF PLEASURE.
I THINK A SAMPLING OF HER NECTAR IS IN ORDER.

DELICATELY, MEPHISTO REACHES ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS AND TASTES BIT OF THE WITCHBLADE'S POWER.
FOOOOOSH!
EYOWW!
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?
BEWARE. A NEW PLAYER HAS ENTERED THE GAME. YOUR SOUL AND MY MIGHT ARE THE PRIZES HE SEEKS.
MY, BUT AREN'T THEY SENSITIVE? I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO HAVE THEM AS MY OWN.
COULD YOU PLEASE, JUST THIS ONCE, TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, IN ENGLISH?
HELLO? ANYONE THERE?
FIGURES.

UMM. WELL... BUT...I MEAN, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET THEM, SIRE? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD, UM, CROSS DIMENSIONS. HEH.
IDIOT. WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW WOULD FILL EVERY LIBRARY IN HELL.
I AM MEPHISTO, LORD OF HELL! I AM PRINCE OF EVIL, THE SERPENT, THE SPIRIT OF UNIVERSAL LIES!
AND YOU THINK ME UNAWARE OF SOMETHING? THERE IS NOTHING THAT I DO NOT KNOW. HAVE YOU HEARD NOTHING I'VE SAID?
HEH. WELL, SIRE, MY HEARING AID HAS BEEN ACTING UP.
LOOK, FOOL, GAZE INTO THE SPHERE. EVEN NOW MY MACHINATIONS BEGIN.

THE PLACE: ANSHIR'S STARSHIP.
THE TIME: (YESTERDAY).
THE PLAYERS: WEAPON ZERO.
I DON'T TRUST LILITH. LOOK AT THE WAY SHE FLIRTS WITH COLONEL STONE.
DON'T BE SILLY, KIKUYO. SHE'D NEVER DO A THING LIKE THAT. SHE'S HIS SISTER-IN-LAW.
SOUNDS TO ME LIKE LITTLE MISS PERFECT IS JEALOUS.
SHUT UP, JAMIE.
YOUR TEAM LACKS THE NECESSARY CAMARADERIE TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY. JAMIE IS STILL NOT ACCEPTED BY THE OTHERS.
I KNOW. SOMETIMES I THINK HE TRIES TO ALIENATE HIMSELF ON PURPOSE.
"BEHOLD, WEAPON ZERO: THREE TIME-DISPLACED YOUTHS LED BY A DISGUSTINGLY HONORABLE MAN, IN THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE THEY FIGHT FOR GOOD, BUT I'M QUITE SURE I CAN TEMPT THEM AWAY FROM THE LIGHT.
"ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH, JAMIE. HE INTRIGUES ME."

"POOR LAD...SO ALONE, SO ANGRY. HE IS THE KEY TO HIS TEAMMATES' DOWNFALL."
AHH, THE SCENE CHANGES.
LOOK HERE, SKRATCH. BEFORE YOU IS N'GOLTH, LEADER OF THE T'SRRI.
THE T'SRRI ARE A RACE OF BEINGS WHO CAN TRAVEL ACROSS DIMENSIONS. IT IS THROUGH THEIR TECHNOLOGY THAT I SHALL ACHIEVE MY GOAL.

YOU SEE THAT SHIP, MY MAGGOT-RIDDEN SKRATCH? THAT IS A T'SRRI WARSHIP.
ON IT IS AN INCREDIBLE DEVICE, ONE CAPABLE OF PIERCING DIMENSIONS. THIS VESSEL SHALL BE MY CHARIOT TO VICTORY.

MASTER, YOU ARE SO DEVILISHLY BRILLIANT.
YES. YES I AM. HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE SMALL PROBLEM.
THE T'SRRI WARSHIP LIES IN PIECES ON THE PLANET EARTH, WHERE IT CRASHED EONS AGO.
AS WONDROUSLY EVIL AS I AM, I DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO IGNITE THE SHIP'S ENGINES AND RESTORE IT TO FLIGHT CAPABILITY.
HMMM, I MUST PONDER THIS. BRING ME MY REGIMENT OF WORMS.
WHERE IN THIS PATHETIC UNIVERSE CAN I FIND A BEING WHO POSSESSES THE ENERGY I NEED?
MASSSTER, WHY DON'T YOU USSSE ONE OF THOSSSE FOOLISSSH EARTH HEROESSS?

YOU DARE? YOU DARE GIVE ADVICE TO THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS? I NEED NO ADVICE FROM THE LIKES OF YOU!
YOUR TONGUE SHALL SCALD IN HELLFIRE!
AWAY FROM ME, ALL OF YOU. YOUR TOUCH DISGUSTS ME.
WHO WILL HELP ME? WHO WILL HELP THE DEVIL HIMSELF?
AS HIS TIRADE SUBSIDES, A MALIGNANT THOUGHT ENTERS MEPHISTO'S MIND.
WAIT... OF COURSE. HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO BLIND?
O, THE DELICIOUS IRONY!

"WHO **BETTER** THAN HIS HIGH AND MIGHTINESS, LORD OF PURITY AND KITTENS AND BASKETS, THE **VILE** SILVER SURFER?

"OH, YES! THE SURFER--**FOULER** OF SO MANY OF MY SCHEMES! HE SHALL NOW ASSIST ME IN MY **GRANDEST EVIL.**

"WITH HIS ACCURSED **POWER COSMIC,** HE CAN **CHARGE** THE SHIP'S ENGINES AND **RESTORE** IT TO ITS FORMER GRANDEUR.

"**HE** WILL CAUSE THE **DESTRUCTION** AND **ENSLAVEMENT** OF AN ENTIRE **DIMENSION!** AND THE BEST PART IS THAT HE WON'T EVEN KNOW IT!"

I FIND IT **STRANGE** THAT I, THE SILVER SURFER, FORMER HERALD OF GALACTUS AND ROAMER OF THE SPACEWAYS, FIND MYSELF ONCE AGAIN RETURNING TO THE ONLY PLANET I DARE TO CALL HOME, EARTH.

"THAT IVORY WHITE SOUL OF HIS WILL NOW BE STAINED FOR ALL ETERNITY."
THIS ASTEROID, IT THREATENS TO PIERCE THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE. I MUST DESTROY IT.
"HOW TO TRICK HIM? HIS IS NOT THE BRIGHTEST MIND IN THE GALAXY. SO...HMMMM..."
WAIT. I HAVE MISSED A LARGE SECTION. IT THREATENS TO FALL TO EARTH AND EXTINGUISH MILLIONS OF LIVES. BY MY SHINING BOARD, I SHALL STOP IT!
"EARTH, YESSS, HE LOVES THAT PLANET AND IT'S FRAIL POPULATION.
"A SIMPLE DISASTER SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT BAIT, AND THE SURFER WILL FLY STRAIGHT INTO MY HANDS."
WITH A BLAST OF MY POWER COSMIC I HAVE ONCE AGAIN SAVED THE INHABITANTS OF EARTH FROM CERTAIN DOOM.

OH, MEPHISTO, YOU **ARE** A GENIUS.

"I CAN SEE IT NOW, MY **KINGDOM OF EVIL**. IT WILL PUT EVEN **WALT DISNEY** TO SHAME. WITH MY QUEEN AT MY SIDE I WILL BE **UNSTOPPABLE**.

THE PLACE: AN EARTH, MUCH LIKE OUR OWN. THE PLAYERS: MEPHISTO, RULER OF THE UNIVERSE, HIS QUEEN AND THEIR COURT OF BLASPHEMOUS TERROR. THE TIME: **SOON**.

THE PLAYERS ARE ALL IN **PLACE**. ALL IS SET IN **MOTION**. SHALL WE **BEGIN**? HAHAHAHA HAHAH!

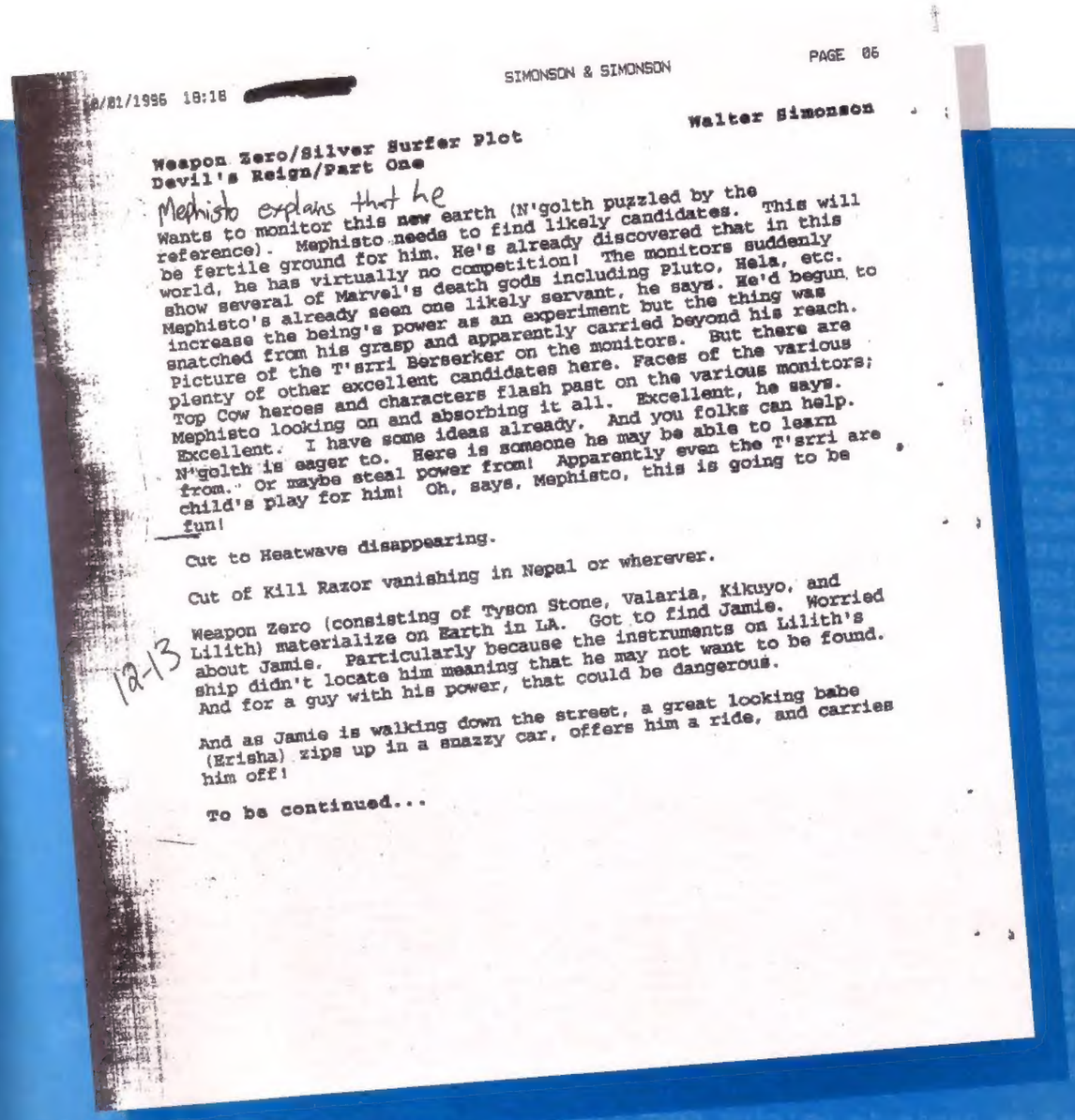
FIN

sketchbook

Silver Surfer / Witchblade

BEHIND THE SCENES GOODIES

DEVILS' REIGN IS AN EIGHT-PART STORYLINE THAT RUNS THROUGHOUT BOTH THE MARVEL AND TOP COW UNIVERSES IN THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER AND JANUARY. THE STORY GETS ROLLING IN CHAPTER ONE, WEAPON ZERO/SILVER SURFER. HERE'S A LOOK AT WALT SIMONSON'S PLOT FOR THAT ISSUE.



10/01/1996 18:18 [redacted] SIMONSON & SIMONSON PAGE 06

Walter Simonson

Weapon Zero/Silver Surfer Plot
Devil's Reign/Part One

Mephisto explains that he Wants to monitor this new earth (N'golth puzzled by the reference). Mephisto needs to find likely candidates. This will be fertile ground for him. He's already discovered that in this world, he has virtually no competition! The monitors suddenly show several of Marvel's death gods including Pluto, Hela, etc. Mephisto's already seen one likely servant, he says. He'd begun to increase the being's power as an experiment but the thing was snatched from his grasp and apparently carried beyond his reach. Picture of the T'srri Berserker on the monitors. But there are plenty of other excellent candidates here. Faces of the various Top Cow heroes and characters flash past on the various monitors; Mephisto looking on and absorbing it all. Excellent, he says. Excellent. I have some ideas already. And you folks can help. N'golth is eager to. Here is someone he may be able to learn from. Or maybe steal power from! Apparently even the T'srri are child's play for him! Oh, says, Mephisto, this is going to be fun!

12-13

Cut to Heatwave disappearing.

Cut of Kill Razor vanishing in Nepal or wherever.

Weapon Zero (consisting of Tyson Stone, Valaria, Kikuyo, and Lilith) materialize on Earth in LA. Got to find Jamie. Worried about Jamie. Particularly because the instruments on Lilith's ship didn't locate him meaning that he may not want to be found. And for a guy with his power, that could be dangerous.

And as Jamie is walking down the street, a great looking babe (Erisha) zips up in a snazzy car, offers him a ride, and carries him off!

To be continued...

HERE'S A PENCILED PAGE FROM CHAPTER TWO, GHOST RIDER/ CYBLADE. NOTE THAT EXISTING ART WAS "DROPPED IN" TO MEPHISTO'S HAND.

"We have your sign," said Thorvin. He held out a pendant on a silver chain. Shef looked at it curiously: a shaft, with five rungs sticking out from it on alternate sides.

"What is it?"

"It is a *kraki,*" replied Thorvin. "A pole-ladder. It is the sign of Rig."

"I have never heard the name of that god. What can you tell me about him that should make me wear his sign?"

"He is the god of climbers. Of wanderers. He is mighty not through himself but through his children. He is the father of Thrall, of Carl, of Jarl. And of others."

"You have to do it one rung at a time," replied Thorvin.

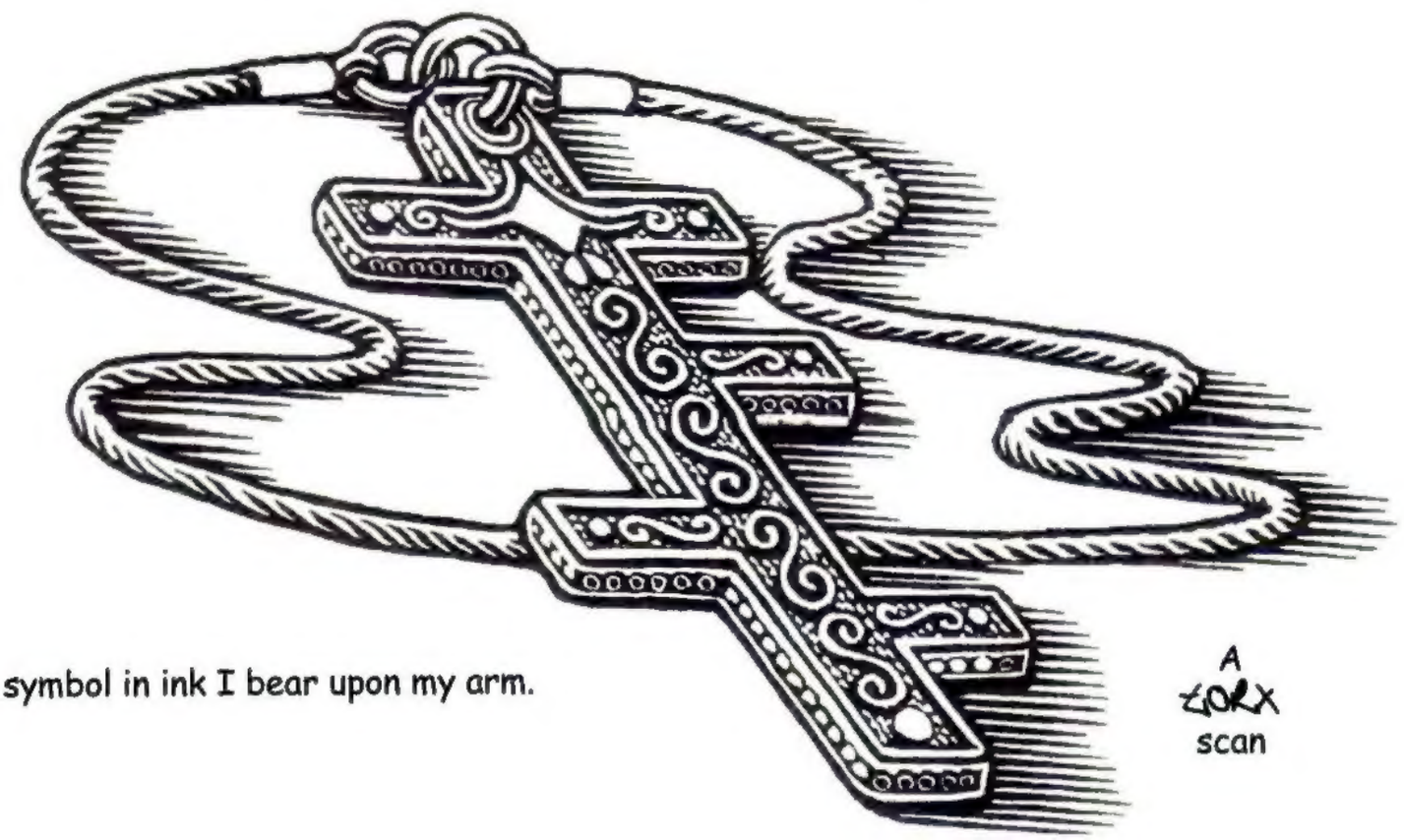
"Hard to climb, difficult to balance, to reach the top. But at the top there are two rungs to grasp on to. One opposite the other. It could almost be a cross."

Thorvin frowned. "Rig and his sign were known in the ages before there ever was a cross. It is not a sign of death. No. It is one of reaching higher, of living better."

Shef smiled, the first time he had done that for many days. "I like your sign, Thorvin," he said. "I will wear it." He slipped the Wayman's pendant round his neck, turned and looked at the misted sea.

Some knot, some pain within him was released, fled.

For the first time in his entire life he felt at peace.



The symbol in ink I bear upon my arm.

A ZORX scan

WIZARD®
Devil's
REIGN™
CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY
This *Devil's Reign* #1/2 was available only through a special offer in *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* #65. Each copy is part of a limited edition which was distributed in a special protective holder with a copy of this certificate.
Bob Harras, Editor-in-Chief, Marvel Comics
Marc Silvestri, President & C.E.O., Top Cow Productions
SILVER SURFER ©1996 MARVEL CHARACTERS INC. WITCHBLADE TM & © TOP COW PRODUCTIONS, INC.
WIZARD AND THE WIZARD LOGOTYPE ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF WIZARD PRESS.